

13 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Recent CIA Publicity

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Two recent developments within CIA should be noted:

a. Following the briefings of the NSC and Congressional leadership, I proposed that CIA findings on Soviet economy be released to the public in the United States and Europe in order to (1) influence curtailment of long-range credits and (2) influence a number of uncommitted leaders of nations in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. This plan was discussed and agreed with the President, Secretaries Rusk, Harriman, Alexis Johnson and others. My

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b. I have felt, and expressed myself to the late President Kennedy, to President Johnson, to Secretary Rusk and others, that the DCI and CIA image must be changed. Its basic and primary responsibilities by law are to assemble all intelligence, analyze, evaluate, estimate and report such intelligence for the benefit of policy makers. This function has been submerged and CIA has been consistently referred to as a "cloak and dagger" outfit whose activities involve (almost exclusively) operations designed to overthrow governments, assassinate Heads of State, involve itself in political affairs of foreign states, and none of these activities are either controlled or coordinated with the White House or the State Department. This is

entirely wrong, both with respect to the activity and the coordination and control, and I wish to attempt to change this image. (NOTE: Hundreds of editorials, and dozens of speeches on the Hill have dealt with this thesis in one form or another, and there has been no rebuttal at any time to my knowledge).

No authorization was given by me for the briefing of press or other columnists (other than Alsop and Murphy) or for attribution or for statements or references to CIA's unique capabilities in Soviet economy or the purpose of the releases.

What has happened is that the two stated purposes "merged" and journalists, including TIME, NEWSWEEK, HERALD TRIBUNE, Charles Bartlett and Mr. Dale of the NEW YORK TIMES, were briefed during late December and early January.

In the case of Charles Bartlett and Mr. Dale, permission was given to attribute the information to CIA by DD/I and PR and apparently additional information on the depth of CIA's work in studying Soviet economy was discussed.

As a result the CIA role, the attribution and the fact that it had finally "spoken out" was of far greater significance than the facts. When the NEW YORK TIMES featured this side of the story in a front-page article, there was a clamour for like information for others and, as a result, CIA invited inquiring press men to come down and receive identical information which was then prepared in a written memorandum. The memorandum was discussed with them and this was interpreted to be a "formal press conference" which is only partially true.

In defense of DDI and PR's activities, it is to be noted that CIA has for 10 years issued unclassified publications on the Soviet economy and the method used in analyzing it. Mr. Allen Dulles used this subject as a favorite topic for his speeches, which were numerous - in fact, Mr. Elder, my assistant, states he has written at least 12 speeches on this subject for Mr. Dulles. However the timing and manner of release has given special notice by the press in this instance.

Attribution to President Johnson for authority to do all of the above is completely wrong, except to the extent that President Johnson knew of, and agreed to, a. and b. above which were entirely separate courses. It was not anticipated that they "merge" as they have.

The consequences are as follows:

1. The White House, and more particularly the State Department, are rightfully disturbed because they do not know the effect this publicity might have on their responsibilities.

2. CIA's methodology and findings have been questioned because a vast amount of information upon which our conclusions are based was not disclosed (and much of it cannot be disclosed), and hence the legitimacy of our conclusions is doubted by some experts and in the public mind.

3. Congressional leaders (Senators Russell, Saltonstall, Stennis, Chairmen Vinson and Cannon) are rightfully disturbed and have so expressed themselves.

4. All of this will be used to emphasize the need for a "Watchdog Committee" and legislation on this is more probable now than at any time in the past.



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6. Activities have been contrary to my specific written and oral orders and warnings of DDCI at staff meetings when the subject was discussed.

As a result it is my intention to issue instructions for the conduct of all public relations activities in the future, their careful coordination at the level of the White House and the State Department, and until these orders are issued I wish absolutely no contact whatsoever, no comments, no discussions with the press except with my personal authorization.